



Arlington Heights Neighborhood Action Plan Implementation Committee

Date: December 2, 2020

Time: 1:00-2:00 PM

Location: Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/j/93341356519>

Meeting ID: 933 4135 6519

Passcode: 593585

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Minutes

Attendance: Ali Carter, Dept. of Planning and Community Development; Jenny Raitt, Dept. of Planning and Community Development; Erin Zwirko, Dept. of Planning and Community Development; Julie Horvath, Century 21 Adams; Len Diggins, ACMi; Mike Rademacher, Dept. of Public Works; Christina Coleman, Dept. of Health and Human Services; Jillian Harvey, Dept. of Health and Human Services; Janet O'Riordan, Old Schwamb Mill; Rachel Zsembery, Arlington Redevelopment Board; Rob Davison, resident

Guests: Cristin Canterbury Bagnall, Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture; Cecily Miller, Public Art Consultant

1. Approval of minutes for meetings on 1/14/20, 2/4/20, and 7/22/20: Motion to approve by Len Diggins; seconded by Rachel Zsembery. The minutes were approved unanimously.
2. Town Meeting update: Jenny Raitt provided an overview of Article 20 on the warrant for the upcoming Town Meeting. This article would allow the Arlington Redevelopment Board to reduce the parking requirement in B3 and B5 business districts down to zero. Under the current zoning bylaw to waive the parking requirement prospective business owners must apply for a variance through the Zoning Board of Appeals, which is a lengthy and potential costly process. There were no questions from the committee about this article.
3. Parklet feedback: Ali described the parklet installations that had been set up in Arlington Heights for both private businesses (Trattoria Nina and The Roasted Granola) and for the public use (1306-1308 Mass Ave). She said through surveys of users, abutters, and anecdotal feedback from business owners she had received a generally positive response about them. There

were several suggestions to add trash cans to the public parklet. Ali thanked Home Taste for keeping the public parklet clean of trash, wiping down the tables regularly and watering the plants in it. She also shared images of the mural installation in the windows of the storefronts at 1306-1308 Mass Ave, which were designed by artist Adria Arch of Arlington and installed by the artist herself along with Cecily Miller and the help of two resident members of this committee, Rob Davison and Jason Forney (accompanied also by his daughter). Ali thanked them for their efforts, especially in the cold weather, to beautifying the neighborhood. She explained that there is one more parklet installation planned to go in the taxi stand at the Arlington Heights bus depot over the winter, as soon as the parklet platforms arrive at DPW.

- a. A commented that she really enjoyed the parklet at The Roasted Granola. She believed it drew people to the Heights and she would love to see them again in the spring. In her opinion the parklets didn't have a negative impact on parking availability. But she did suggest that doing something to elevate the visual appearance of the parklets, particularly the orange jersey barriers, would be advisable.
 - b. Rob Davison commented that he would love to see the parklets back in the spring.
4. Public art projects and discussion of future opportunities and funding: Ali reviewed potential public art project ideas that the committee had discussed in previous meetings, which include the following:
- a. More window murals
 - b. Relocate parklet from taxi cab stand onto MBTA property at Heights Depot and include public art in the proposal

Ali then reintroduced Cecily Miller, Public Art Consultant, and Cristin Canterbury Bagnall, co-Chair of the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC) to the committee. She introduced Jillian Harvey and Christina Coleman of the Department of Health and Human Services' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Division (DEI) to help inform conversations about art projects that deal with issues of racism, equity, and representation. The committee had a discussion and came to an agreement about separating placemaking efforts from "protest art," and that it was not ideal to lump the two efforts together without being very intentional.

Specific public art ideas around the placemaking efforts in the parklet included adding cut vinyl shapes to the plastic jersey barriers to make them more visually interesting. Cecily described how this could be done as a volunteer-driven community art project, with residents adopting and designing their own barrier. Cecily also talked about the potential of doing more window murals to add more color to the neighborhood. Ideally we would have an artist create designs that could also be implemented by the community. There is also potential to use the stencils created for the Minuteman Bikeway haiku project and to paint the stencils on the sidewalks in the Heights, as has been done with great success in East Arlington. We could do a new call for poetry for haiku in the Heights. Jesse Brown could do a haiku writing workshop on zoom.

Len Diggins suggested that the water tower on Park Ave could be another location for public art. Specifically that art could be projected on that or the other water tower on the north side of Mass Ave in the Heights.

The committee discussed that artwork must have some sort of theme and that there should be community involvement in creating that theme. Youth involvement was specifically emphasized.

5. Next steps: Ali said she will firm up a public art proposal for the Heights with Cristin and Cecily before the next meeting and will discuss fundraising options with the group the next time as well.